

Venus won't be in Filderstadt

AFP, Filderstadt

US Open and Wimbledon champion Venus Williams has pulled out of the \$85,000-dollar WTA tournament that begins here Monday, organisers announced Thursday.

"She won't be coming for family reasons," said tournament director Michael Uhden, without expanding on whether the recent terrorist attacks in the United States had influenced the world number four's decision.

However, compatriots Jennifer Capriati and Lindsay Davenport will be competing along with veteran Martina Navratilova, 44, who will play in the doubles with Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

Pakistan call

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"We are disappointed that this tour has also not gone ahead as per schedule because we would very much like to have some international cricket," said Butt.

"But there is nothing we can do about the prevailing situation. The Sri Lankans were keen to play the matches but we had to call the programme off."

The PCB has said it has suffered revenue losses of \$15 million dollars this year due to cancellations by India, for political reasons, and New Zealand.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are due to play each other in a tri-nation tournament in Sharjah from October 26. The third team is Zimbabwe.

"So far the Sharjah tournament is on... We have even started completing the travel documents for our players," said Butt.

Injured trio

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for the aborted tour of Pakistan, ahead of Otago opener Matthew Horne.

Offspinner Glen Sulzberger comes in as the team's No 2 spin-bowling option behind Vettori.

Cairns' return is a huge boost for the side, who play the first Test in Brisbane on November 8.

However, Cairns will not leave with the team next Friday. He will remain in Christchurch to continue his rehabilitation before joining his team-mates in time for the second tour match, a four-day fixture against an ACT Invitation 11 in Canberra starting on October 21.

Sulzberger, Paul Wiseman and legspinner Brooke Walker were in a three-way tussle to fill the second spin-bowling berth in the 15-man squad.

The inclusion of Nash and Cairns means two changes have been made to the tour party selected for Pakistan, with Nash replacing the injured Jacob Oram and Cairns stepping in for James Franklin.

Hadlee added the selectors retained the right to replace any player if doubt surrounded his fitness before the first Test.

"Dion Nash has undertaken a very careful and prolonged recovery and rehabilitation programme. He has reached the stage where he needs match play to prove his fitness," Hadlee said.

Nash and Vettori have not played at Test level for 12 months.

Cairns and Nash are not the only quicker bowlers needing to prove themselves again.

The same applies to left-arm swing bowler Shayne O'Connor, who is also returning from knee surgery after spearheading the attack in South Africa last season.

Vincent's inclusion ahead of Horne was the only contentious selection among the batsmen.

SQUAD

Stephen Fleming (captain), Nathan Astle, Matthew Bell, Chris Cairns, Chris Martin, Craig McMillan, Dion Nash, Shayne O'Connor, Adam Parore, Mark Richardson, Mathew Sinclair, Glen Sulzberger, Daryl Tuffey, Daniel Vettori, Lou Vincent

Skin-tight security over France-Algeria tie

Football

AFP, Paris

It's only a friendly football match, but it has taken on the look of a military operation.

When France take on Algeria at the Stade de France on Saturday, the teams will be protected by eight companies of CRS riot police as well as around 640 police officers.

Cars and fans will be searched. In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, nobody is prepared to take chances.

On Saturday, four of the CRS companies will keep close tabs on spectators entering the stadium closely checking tickets.

It's a job usually carried out by ground officials, but the Paris authorities are following the examples set down in other high-risk sporting encounters.

VIPs, always high-profile at these matches, will have their invitations closely checked, said a police source at the Seine-Saint-Denis prefecture adding that the measures could be adopted on a regular basis at sporting events in the future.

Paris has a high number of Algerians living in the city and they are expected to be out in force on Saturday night.

Police intelligence has discovered that dozens of Palestinian flags have been bought and circulated in the city.

Authorities are also bracing themselves for slogans backing Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, the man believed to be the mastermind behind the attacks in America, to be much in evidence.

The French national anthem, the



PHOTO: AFP

France stars (L-R) Thierry Henry, Youri Djorkaeff, Willy Sagnol and Franck Leboeuf warm up during a training session in Clairefontaine on October 4.

Marseillaise, is expected to be booted.

Large parts of the public transport system will be closely guarded while cars entering the stadium car parks will be the subject of vigorous external and internal checks.

The ground itself and its buildings will be also inspected before the first spectators arrive.

French security forces believe that developments in the last few weeks have added urgency to the situation.

Two Algerians were arrested in London last week on suspicion of having links with the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

Furthermore, it was also

revealed last week that the French team, who are World and European champions, had been targeted by Algerian Islamist militants during the Euro 2000 tournament in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The plot, hatched by a dissident section which had split from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) group, was foiled and ten people were arrested.

Of three suspected Islamist militants arrested in France in connection with the planned attack, one man, Abdel Mechat, has been placed under judicial investigation, which under the French legal system is the first step to formal charges.

MacGill knows the truth!

AFP, Sydney

Stuart MacGill said Friday he was resigned to the fact he would only get back into the Australian Test team if fellow leg-spinner Shane Warne fell sick.

Warne has taken more Test wickets than any other spinner (407) but he claimed just seven wickets to MacGill's 24 in the matches in which they were both selected.

However, that was in the two-year period following Warne's 1998 shoulder operation.

MacGill was brutally realistic about his chances of making the Test team for the upcoming series against New Zealand and South Africa.

"I think the bottom line is if Warne is playing, I'm not going to," the 30-year-old said.

"And if he is injured, I will play both Tests and one-dayers, that's just the way it goes."

But he refused to be drawn into a contest with Warne, who is two years older.

"As soon as you start concentrating too much about other players you are not committing yourself to your own game," MacGill said.

MacGill's last international appearance was in the final home Test against the West Indies in Sydney early this year when he took seven wickets in the first innings.

Warne was the only leg spinner selected for the subsequent tours of India and England where he struggled on the former and starred in the Ashes series.

The two spinners have been selected together in only five Tests since MacGill made his debut for Australia in February 1998.

MJ takes a break

AFP, Wilmington

Michael Jordan was tired after completing his third consecutive day of double practice sessions Thursday and somewhat relieved at the chance for a rest break.

The former Chicago Bulls star, making a National Basketball Association comeback at age 38 with the Washington Wizards, had only planned to play in one session a day during pre-season training camp here in his hometown.

"All of us went through a little tired period," Jordan said. "But we grinded our way through."

Wizards coach Doug Collins called off Friday morning's workout to give a rest. He does not want to push too hard too soon as he tries to bring Jordan along physically and mentally.

Jordan's target dates for this season are an exhibition opener in one week at Detroit and the October 30 season opener at New York.

"He has got enough pressure on him," Collins said. "I can't imagine what thoughts run through the guy's head when he is in bed at night and thinks about what's coming October 30, the scrutiny and the world attention."

"I want to relieve some of that pressure. It's too much for any man to bear, even Michael Jordan."

When Jordan made his first return from a retirement in 1995, Bulls coach Phil Jackson had Jordan working out only once a day rather than twice.

"Phil was trying to manage my playing, save my body," Jordan said. "I didn't go two-a-days my last four years."

Jordan plans a two-year comeback during which he hopes to rally the Wizards to respectability after a team-worst 19-63 showing last year. He said he had no plans to promise to play beyond the 2002-2003 campaign.

Sizzling

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good catch, running towards fine leg.

The South African bowlers did a reasonable job to restrict India to another 86 runs in the remaining 14.4 overs, with none of the other batsmen able to build an innings.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the India innings against South Africa in the opening match of the Standard Bank triangular series in Johannesburg Friday:

Table with columns for batsman, runs, and bowler. Includes names like Ganguly, Boucher, Kemp, Tendulkar, Gibbs, Kallis, Dravid, McKenzie, Nel, Yuvraj, Kirsten, Klusener, Shewag, Pollock, Agarkar, Das, and extras.

ACB's Langer plan

Cricket

AFP, Perth

The chairman of Australia's cricket selectors, Trevor Hohns, will be asked to nominate the position in which he would like Test batsman Justin Langer to shape up for his State side, Western Australia, this summer.

Western Australia's new coach Michael Veletta revealed here Friday he will seek guidance from Hohns before deciding where Langer will bat in his State's opening match, a one-day limited-overs contest, next Friday. Left-handed Langer, who has made a reputation as a regular number three, forged an unbeaten century when recalled to the Australian side two months ago for the fifth Ashes Test in an unaccustomed role as opener in place of New South Wales right-hander Michael Slater.

The pair are now locked in a battle for the one unsettled position

in Australia's top order as the Australians train their sights on the opening Test of the summer, against New Zealand, starting Brisbane November 8.

Langer, 30, who believes he has better prospects of selection for



Australia again if he aims for an opening role, has already

approached Veletta about opening for Western Australia in early Sheffield Shield and one-day matches in a bid to impress selectors ahead of the first Test.

"He's obviously very keen because he's done well at international level (as an opener)," said Veletta.

"The State side has an obligation to develop cricketers for Australia and we also have an obligation to develop cricketers for Western Australia to make our side a success," he said.

"We've got to be in a position to make a judgement call as to which is more important to us."

"And if it is to develop cricketers for Australia, which is very important to us, and Justin's role with Australia is as an opener, then I would suggest we would have to support that."

Until he was used as a stop-gap opener for Australia, Langer was a highly successful number three -- a position in which he has previously excelled for his State as well.

Mixed day for hosts

Tennis

AFP, Moscow

Top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia was made to fight for his quarterfinal spot in the one-million-dollar Kremlin Cup ATP tournament during a 6-3, 7-6 eventual win over David Nalbandian Thursday.

The 27-year-old Russian, the defending champion here, looked in command in the opening set breaking the 19-year-old Argentine's serve to take the first set in 26 minutes.

Nalbandian broke early in the second, earning a 2-0 lead but Kafelnikov levelled immediately, winning the set and the match in a tie-breaker.

Marat Safin, who was seeded second here, failed to join his compatriot in the quarters after 23-year-old Slovak Dominik Hrbaty grabbed a 6-0, 4-6, 7-6 victory.

Hrbaty ousted the home crowd's favourite in the opening set in 22 minutes.

In the second set Safin, US Open semifinalist this year, tightened his grip on the game to win 6-4.

The rivals exchanged breaks throughout the deciding set, forcing a tie break. There, Hrbaty imposed near-flawless precision in decisive moments to force his rival out.

Fourth seed Tommy Haas of Germany earned his quarterfinal ticket winning his sixth match in eight head-to-head meetings with Swede Thomas Enquist in straight sets 7-5, 6-2.

Marc Rosset of Switzerland, the only player to have participated in all 12 Kremlin Cups, beat French sixth seed Fabrice Santoro in straight sets 6-2, 6-4.

France was left rueing another early exit when women's second seed Amelie Mauresmo led Thursday's exodus of seeded players in the 1,185,000-dollar WTA section of the event after going down to Daja Bedanova 6-2, 6-7, 6-4.

Mauresmo, who is ranked sixth in the world, started the match with an immediate break earning a 2-0 lead. But her 18-year-old Czech rival pulled her game together to win six straight games and take the opening set 6-2 in 31 minutes.

In the second set Bedanova took the initiative, breaking her opponent's serve in the seventh game.

But Mauresmo, 22, broke back level to force a tie-break, which she won to pull level at 1-1.

But Bedanova proved hungrier at the crucial moments of the deciding set and finally won 6-4 and the match in just under two hours.

"I played well tonight," Bedanova said after the match. "I served well and it helped me a lot. I made few mistakes in the deciding moments and it was the key to victory today."

Belgian 19-year-old Justine Henin, seeded third, also failed to escape an early exit on her debut appearance, suffering her first defeat in her third head-to-head meeting with Austria's Barbara Schett 5-7, 7-6, 6-2.

Russia's Anastasia Myskina swept into the quarterfinals past Bulgarian seventh seed Magdalena Maleeva in three sets 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.

Sixth seed Silvia Farina Elia and Yugoslaviana Jelena Dokic, seeded fifth, earned their quarterfinal tickets after ousting Uzbekistani Iroda Tulyaganova and Russia's Galina Fokina respectively.

Waugh wants

FROM PAGE 13 illness has led to speculation he might quit -- a suggestion that makes him bristle.

"If you want me to keep playing, keep writing me off because I enjoy that," he said.

The Australians will host New Zealand and South Africa in separate three-Test series later this year, with the contest against the Proteas likely to determine the number one Test ranking.

The Australians are currently number one in the world, but the South Africans could overtake them.

"Their profile hasn't been as high as ours but they are a side that gets the job done and are really hard to beat," Waugh said.

"If we beat those guys, then I guess we can say to everyone we are the number one side in the world. I think until we beat them, then there's still a bit of conjecture as to who is number one."

Hewitt strolls

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Reigning US Open champion Lleyton Hewitt continued his winning

streak since Flushing Meadow by beating Francisco Clavet to secure a semifinal berth at the Japan Open on Friday.

The world number three will take on the American James Blake -- surprise conqueror of former world number one Marcelo Rios -- while



PHOTO: AFP

Lleyton Hewitt of Australia is jubilant after beating Spaniard Francisco Clavet at the Japan Open on Friday.

Michel Kratochvil is to play Slovakian Karel Kucera after his victory over reigning champion Sjeng Schalken.

Hewitt, who also helped Australia qualify for the Davis Cup finals two weeks ago, overcame the loss of the first set to record a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory over the eighth-seeded Spaniard.

"I'm still pretty physically and mentally drained a little bit after everything has gone on the last couple of weeks, but I get pumped up when I feel I need pumped up," said the 20-year-old.

"It's very hard to play your best tennis coming off everything that has happened. It's tough to do week in and week out. I've just got to try to do as well as possible, giving 100 per cent everytime I step onto the tennis court."

"I was able to raise the level when I had to," he added.

After squandering a 2-0 lead to go one set down, the world number three survived a tight second set. The crucial point came in the ninth game when the Spaniard was forced into a backhand error at 30-40.

Clavet, ranked 60th in the world, appeared to run out of steam in the final set and allowed the Australian to wrap the game up just short of the two-hour mark.

Hewitt's victory set up a re-match against Blake, who stretched him to five sets in the second round of the US Open.

Blake pulled off a major upset by beating seventh seed Marcelo Rios 4-6, 6-4, 6-1, playing flawless service games in the last two sets against the former world number one.

Fifth-seed Kratochvil saw off reigning champion Schalken in straight sets to fifth. The serve-and-volley specialist broke the second-seeded Dutch baseliner early in the first set and never surrendered the initiative, eventually winning 6-3, 6-4.

Kratochvil will take on Karol Kucera of Slovakia, who eliminated the final local hope, Takao Suzuki, 6-3, 6-3.

Athens set to play it again

AFP, Greece

A recording of the Olympic hymn, dating back to the first modern Games in Athens in 1896, is to be used again when the Olympics return to the Greek city in 2004.

The recording was made on a mechanical piano and a copy placed on to a cassette which has been passed to the organising committee (ATHOC) by an American collector, said Zacharenia Simandirakis, the head of historical archives in Crete.

Lasting for five minutes, the version of the hymn was contained in a cylinder in the piano belonging to Prince George of Greece who was the vice-president of the Olympics Games council when the first Olympics were held in Athens.

Composed by Greek Spyros Samaras and based on a poem by countryman Costis Palamas, the hymn was officially adopted by the IOC in 1958.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes clues like 'Eminem's genre', 'Garfield's owner', 'Tested the waters', etc.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with clues for words. Includes clues like '5-25', 'W D M A H W Y W N E M T W R', etc.